

Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Report 2006-2007

531 Robertson Blvd., Suite B Walterboro, SC 29488

August 2007

Board of Commissioners

I. M. Benton, Chairman
Deborah Blankenship, Vice Chairman
Cleveland Hiott III, Secretary/Treasurer
Marion Rizer, Commissioner
Roger Harriett, Commissioner
Reverend Gerald T. Mabry, Chaplain

Staff

Sharon Hrvol, Administrative Assistant
SC Department of Natural Resources
Jennifer Majors, Programs Coordinator
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Fred Tritapoe, District Conservationist
Eddie Mitchell, Soil Conservation Tech.

The Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District takes pride in presenting the 2006-2007 Annual Report. The activities of the conservation district are governed by a five-member board of commissioners of which two are appointed by the state, and three are elected in the general election. The conservation district works closely with federal and state partners to provide assistance in natural resources conservation throughout Colleton County. The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical support to the district. The SC Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division employ a Programs Coordinator to provide education and information support to the conservation district.

Arthur “Stevie” Beach named Conservationist of the Year



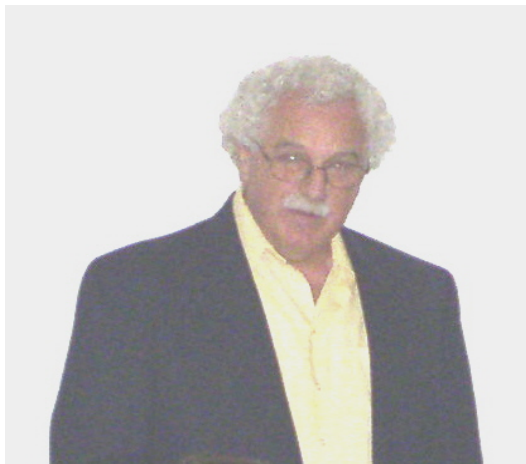
Stevie Beach and I. M. Benton

Annually, the Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes an individual for his/her achievements in the field of conservation. This year, we are proud to recognize Arthur “Stevie” Beach, as 2006 Conservationist of the Year. Mr. Beach is in the last year of his EQIP contract where he has addressed multiple resource concerns within his cow/calf operation. He has installed 5200 feet of cross fencing in order to facilitate a prescribed grazing system covering 60 acres. New watering facilities have been established within the grazing

system to provide a higher quality of water for livestock. Heavy Use Areas have been constructed under the watering troughs to protect the animals from health issues. He has fenced livestock out of areas considered environmentally sensitive and has given them access to clean water and grass through the rotational grazing system. He has installed 7,650 square feet of heavy use area. He also keeps accurate farm records which is a critical part of his efficient farming operation. Stevie soil test annually and follows up with an application of the recommended nutrients and lime.

Mr. Beach was born and raised on the family farm near Walterboro. He graduated from Walterboro High School in 1968 and continued his education at Trident Technical College and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a Degree in Civil Engineering. He was a member of the South Carolina National Guard and retired as a maintenance engineer from the South Carolina Department of Transportation, with 30+ years of service. He worked with Triplett-King and Associates for 4 years as a quality assistance manager. He now runs the family farm, a legacy left to him by his father, Utsey Beach. His mother Connie Beach and his sister Linda Craven are proud of his accomplishments. Dedication, hard work, strong character, and commitment to excellence are a few traits that our 2006 Conservationist of the Year possesses.

Ellis Morrow ~ Guest Speaker at the Annual Affiliate Members & Award Banquet



Ellis Morrow

The Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District held their Annual Affiliate Banquet at Southland Restaurant on April 24, 2007. Chairman I. M. Benton welcomed all affiliate members and guests. The guest speaker for the evening was Ellis Morrow. Mr. Morrow retired from the Natural Resources Conservation Service on January 3, 2007. Ellis grew up on a family farm in Monticello, Kentucky. He received a BS Degree in Agriculture from Western Kentucky University. Ellis began his career with the Soil Conservation Service in June 1971 serving as District Conservationist in Western Kentucky. In August 1978, he came to South Carolina as a RC&D Coordinator in Walterboro. He went to Florence in June 1981 and to the State Office in Columbia in September 1985. Ellis has two daughters, Jackie Youmans of Walterboro and Christi Morrow of Columbia and

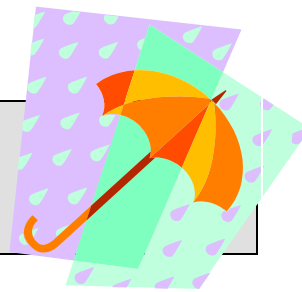
two grandchildren, Lee and Sydne Youmans. Mr. Morrow spoke about the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Programs that benefit farmers and landowners in South Carolina. NRCS is in the process of developing the 2007 Farm Bill. Morrow said that positive changes are being made to conciliate programs and promote conservation in our state. He encouraged everyone to become involved in the Conservation of our Natural Resources – soil, water, air, forest, and wildlife.

The Poster Contest winners were recognized and received ribbons. The Essay Contest winners for 2007 and the Conservationist of the Year for 2006 were honored with plaques. Chairman I. M. Benton thanked everyone for their continued support of the Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District.



2007 Earth Day Poster Contest

"WATER WISE...The Wonderful World of Water"



The theme for our 2007 Earth Day Poster Contest was "Water Wise...The Wonderful World of Water". Awards were presented to the winning classes by grade level. The participating teachers and their principals were recognized at our Annual Banquet. The winners at each grade level received a \$50.00 check and 1st place ribbon.

The winners were:

Mrs. Kathy Polk & Mrs. Mary Nesmith's kindergarten class at Forest Hills Elementary

Mrs. Lisa Slocum's 1st grade class at Colleton Prep Academy

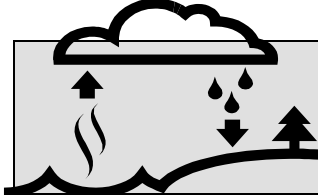
Mrs. Margie Lemacks' 2nd grade class at Forest Hills Elementary

Mrs. Sheila Ellis' 3rd grade class at Forest Hills Elementary

Mrs. Beth Warren's 4th grade class at Colleton Prep Academy

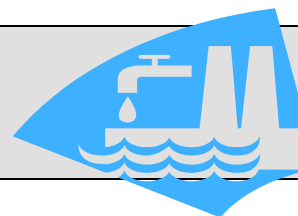


We would like to thank Ms. Gloria Valentine principal at Forest Hills Elementary School and Mr. Arthur Ellis headmaster at Colleton Prep Academy for their support.



Conservation Essay Contest

"WATER WISE...Our Lives Depend on Water"



The theme for our 2007 Earth Day Essay Contest was "Water Wise...Our Lives Depend on Water". Awards were presented to the following winners in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. First place winners received a plaque and a \$100.00 savings bond. Second place winners received a plaque and a \$50.00 saving bond. Third place winners received a plaque.

6th Grade Winners



First Place ~ Elizabeth L. Beach



Second Place ~ Storm Rogers



Third Place ~Dakota Crosby

7th Grade Winner



First Place ~ Meredith Matthews



8th Grade Winners



First Place ~ Elizabeth Varn



Second Place ~ Anna Crosby

Thank You

We would like to thank Ruffin Middle School teachers, Mrs. Kimberly Fee, Ms. Ann Robinson, and Ms. Janet Strickland, and Colleton Prep teacher, Mrs. Vicki Schrimph, for encouraging their students to participate in our essay contest. We also thank Headmaster Arthur Ellis and Principal Harry Jenkins for their support.

All Colleton County students in 6th ~ 9th grades are eligible to enter the essay contest.



Donnelley ~ Rice Field Trunk

Soil & Water Stewardship Week

"Conservation's Power" was the theme for the 2007 Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 29 through May 6, 2007. Each year the Colleton Conservation District celebrates this observance with area churches to help remind us of the power of each person to conserve resources and improve the world. We need to take time to learn about energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy. We need to use more renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and alternative fuel. It is also important to remember that the key components of energy sustainability are efficiency and conservation.

This year Rev. Gerald Mabry organized a tour of Donnelley Wildlife Management Area. Our Tour Guide was SC-DNR Biologist Dean Harrigal. Donnelley WMA is named in honor of the late Gaylord Donnelley and his wife Dorothy for the contributions they made to the ACE Basin Project. This unique property is a cross section of the Lowcountry, encompassing a diversity of wetland and upland habitats. This area has managed rice fields, forested wetlands, tidal marsh, agricultural lands, and a variety of upland forest types, including a natural stand of longleaf pine. The 8,048-acre Donnelley Wildlife Management Area is managed by DNR to provide optimum habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and to provide public recreation and education. The area also has two designated nature trails and miles of dirt roads for hikers and bicyclists.

Dean Harrigal provided our group with a wonderful and informative tour of the Donnelley WMA. This is truly a unique area that showcases the Lowcountry at its finest.



Donnelley ~ Pond



Carolina Coastal Adventure

The Carolina Coastal Adventure is a three-day adventure for high school students in the 9th or 10th grade. The three days of activities included classroom instruction in water quality analysis and watersheds, canoeing in a cypress swamp at Santee Canal Park, and a tour of the Jeffries Steam Plant in Santee Circle. The Colleton Conservation District sponsors two students each year to attend this event in Berkeley County. Dakota Mitchell and Timmy O'Connor represented Colleton County in October 2006. Both, Dakota and Timmy, are 9th grade students at Colleton County High School. They enjoyed their three day adventure.



Dakota Mitchell and Timmy O'Connor

Natural Resources Grant Program



The Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District's purpose through this grant program is to provide funding assistance for environmental education-based projects that positively impact the environment. These 'on the ground' benefits that enhance natural resources should be used as a tool to educate. Projects should enhance one or more of the following five natural resources categories: soil, water, air, plants, and animals. We are seeking projects that involve people, community, and environment.

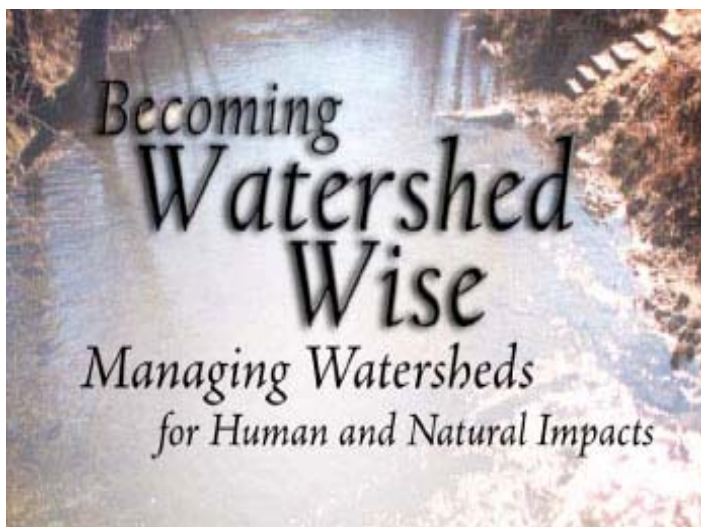
Ms. Janice Young, a teacher at the Education Center, sent in a proposal detailing their project "Watch Us Bloom". "Watch Us Bloom" is a project designed to teach students about gardening. This teaching garden is like an outdoor classroom. It will provide an opportunity for students to learn about nature and the importance of protecting and conserving our natural resources. Mrs. Young said "the students enjoyed watching their hard work blossom". Project "Watch Us Bloom" will continue in the fall with a vegetable garden. We thank Mrs. Young for the before and after pictures of their on going project. The garden is being enjoyed by the students, parents, and visitors.

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District was pleased to fund this grant request and to see such positive results.



Education Center ~ After

2007 Conservation Partnership Conference



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD), held the annual Conservation Partnership Conference on January 3-6, 2007 at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

The conference began with a one-day symposium. *The Future of Renewable Energy in SC* sponsored by the SC Soil & Water Conservation Society. Participants learned about biodiesel use for agriculture, "green power", and the USDA financial incentives for use of biodiesel and E-85. The remaining days of the conference centered on the theme *Becoming Watershed Wise: Managing Watershed for Human and Natural Impacts*. Some topics discussed were

Watershed 101, Watershed Resources and Watershed Education.

The conference attracted exhibitors from surrounding businesses and included several educational conservation demonstrations. There was also media coverage from Clemson University's "Your Day" Talk Radio Show.

Blankenship and Harriett Win Re-election

Deborah Blankenship and Roger Harriett were re-elected in the General Election to fill two elected Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners positions in Colleton County. Both Deborah Blankenship and Roger Harriett understand the importance of conserving our natural resources. They are dedicated to helping educate students and landowners about conservation of our natural resources. Conservation district commissioners are non-salaried officials that serve a 4-year term, and attend monthly board meetings.

Jennifer Majors ~ Program Coordinator



Jennifer Majors was hired April 2, 2007 as SC DNR Program Coordinator. She will work with the conservation district commissioners and the Partnership staff in Colleton, Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. She will provide conservation and educational programs. Her office is located at the Blue Heron Nature Center in Ridgeland, SC.

Jennifer holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Science and Growth Management Studies from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. Her work experience includes work for the environmental department for Seminole County Government, Florida and as an Education Instructor and Environmental Specialist at SeaWorld and Discovery Cove in Orlando where she conducted educational presentations and regulatory requirements.

Please join Colleton Conservation District in welcoming Jennifer to Colleton County.

Bob Eppinette ~ Soil Scientist Retires

We would like to say thank you to Bob Eppinette, Soil Scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Bob retired on March 30th, after a 33 year career with NRCS. His career began with the Soil Mapping of Colleton, Hampton, and Bamberg counties. In 1993, Bob came to the Walterboro Field Office as area Resource Soil Scientist, assisting Colleton County and surrounding counties. In addition to his duties as Soil Scientist, Bob presented Soil Programs in area schools, judged Soil Contests, and for several years judged the essay contest for the Colleton Conservation District. Bob and his wife Gail live in Walterboro.

Bob, you will be missed.....we thank you for a job well done and wish you a great retirement.



Sweatman Farms and EQIP

By Amy Maxwell, USDA ~ NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist



South Carolina's Sweatman Farms is a 2,000-acre row crop and cotton operation, spanning both Colleton & Dorchester Counties. Farmed full-time by Jeff Sweatman, along with his son Justin, the farm is an outstanding example of the benefits of conservation. Sweatman's great grandfather farmed this land, and while the present generation of Sweatman's may have inherited the farm, what's more important is that they also inherited a strong conservation ethic. The Sweatman's believe that it is important to conserve soil and water resources. "I love

farming and working the land. I also know that I need to do my part to take care of the resources that have supported my family," explained Sweatman.

Through the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Sweatman enrolled nearly 500 acres of his land to protect water quality. The installation of field borders and filter strips helps protect nearby water sources from harmful runoff of chemicals and excessive nutrients. Ultimately, the benefits of EQIP are helping to protect the nearby Edisto River.

NRCS District Conservationist Fred Tritapoe said, "There are many benefits to the conservation practices that have been installed on this acreage, and that also includes improved wildlife habitat." The vegetation in the field borders provides excellent nesting and cover for upland birds.

Sweatman also strip-till's his cotton. He says there is a bit of maintenance necessary to manage the field borders, such as occasional disking, but the environmental benefits are worth it. "With the assistance I received through EQIP, and the guidance of the NRCS conservationists who assisted me, I have been able to improve my operation for both efficiency and soil and water quality enhancement," said Sweatman. "The field borders don't require much work, and really, they take care of themselves."

Sweatman first enrolled in EQIP in 2003. The program offers producers incentive payments to encourage them to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management. Since its establishment in the 1996 Farm Bill, EQIP has obligated nearly \$1.08 billion to help producers protect soil and water resources.

Sweatman's conservation ethic, as well as his desire to pass on his love for farming, is what keeps him going. "My son loves the land as much as I do, and I hope that he will continue the family tradition." Sweatman is also proud of the family's recent addition—a new granddaughter. "I hope that she will be able to see the work that our family has done over the years to protect this land, and that she too will gain an appreciation and love for the land."

2006~2007 Affiliate Members

* denotes new members

Supporting ~ \$35

American Forestry Management
Benton's Feed, Seed & Garden
Carroll Management Co., Inc. *
Cheeha-Combahee Plantation
Cockfield Plantation
David W. Barnes
Double L Farms
First Federal of SC
Gregory & Mary Hudson
Hope Plantation
Howard E. Thomas, Inc.
John Graham

Johnny & Donna Craven
Lowcountry Soil Consulting
New York Life Insurance
Norris Laffitte
Plum Hill Plantation
Rizer's Pork & Produce
White Wood, Inc

Hill Tire Center
Joseph F. Flowers, MD
Loblolly Tree Farm, LP
Ravenwood Plantation
Vision Outdoor Advertising

Contributing ~ \$50

Bank of Walterboro *
Enterprise Bank of SC
Gladys M. Murray Flowers

Benefactor ~ \$100+

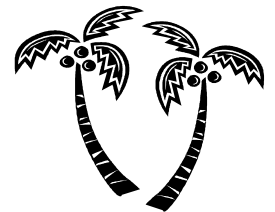
AgSouth *
Coastal Electric Coop., Inc.
Farm Bureau *
Neland Development Co.
Palmetto Rural Telephone

The Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District would like to thank our affiliate members who have generously donated in the past and to welcome our new members. Your support can make a difference in educating the public about conserving the abundance of natural resources in Colleton County. Let's keep Colleton County a wonderful place to live.

Affiliate Membership

Yes, I would like to become a sponsor of the Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District.

Please check one: ☐ Supporting Membership \$35.00
 ☐ Contributing Membership \$50.00
 ☐ Benefactor Membership \$100.00 +



How would you like your membership listed? Individual or Company name

Name _____

Company Name _____

Company Contact Person _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

Donation Enclosed _____

Mail form to:

Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District
531 Robertson Blvd., Suite B
Walterboro, SC 29488



NRCS Natural Resources
Conservation Service

The Conservation District relies on NRCS to provide technical assistance to landowners in Colleton County. Assistance is provided with implementation of conservation practices such as wildlife and fishpond management, subsurface drainage, residue management, nutrient and pest management, prescribed grazing, and other technical practices, which may require engineering surveys and designs. Last year, NRCS assisted 768 customers with conservation issues concerning agriculture, forestry, wildlife, recreation, and engineering. NRCS is also involved with the administration of various cost share programs such as the WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program), the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), and the WRP (Wetland Reserve Program). In addition, NRCS provides technical assistance in the CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and certain projects involving RC&D and the Willow Swamp Watershed.

Cost-Share Programs

by Fred Tritapoe

Helping People Help the Land...

Conservation Reserve Program - CRP provides landowners with the opportunity to retire cropland in environmentally sensitive areas. The continuous sign-up allows for the establishment of wildlife areas, trees, filter strips, and riparian buffers. The CP-33 (Quail Habitat Buffers) has provided Colleton County Landowners with incentives to establish native cover around the edge of cropfields. In the last 2 years, over 200 acres of native cover strips have been established in the county to enhance quail habitat.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - WHIP provides financial incentives to develop habitat for wildlife on private lands. Cost share is available for such practices as prescribed burning, native cover management, tree planting, timber stand improvement, and natural regeneration. Colleton County has 11 landowners enrolled in the program for a total of 8,465 acres.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP provides incentive payments up to 50% cost sharing for conservation practices such as microirrigation, erosion control structures, field borders, pasture and hayland practices, livestock management, and animal waste facilities. In Colleton County there are currently 1,897 acres enrolled in this program. EQIP also provides for a Small Farmers Initiative. Costsharing items include but are not limited to microirrigation, no-till, prescribed grazing, fencing, heavy use area establishment, livestock watering system, and record keeping.

Wetland Reserve Program - WRP is a voluntary program to restore wetlands that have been manipulated through drainage. Landowners can establish permanent conservation easements on land offered and in return receive payment on the agriculture value of the land as well as 100 percent of the cost of restoration.

Colleton Soil & Water Conservation District
531 Robertson Blvd., Suite B
Walterboro, SC 29488

Phone: 843-549-1821 (ext. 3)

Fax: 843-549-6001

Email: sharon.hrvol@sc.nacdnet.net

The Colleton Soil and Water Conservation District Board meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month except November. Please call 549-1821 (ext. 3) for more information.

Conservation Projects in Colleton County



No-Till Cotton ~ Sweatman Farms



No-Till Peanuts ~ Sweatman Farms



EQIP-SFI ~ Water Facility & HUA ~ Robert Chisom



WHIP ~ Food Plot/Wildlife ~ Salkehatchie Forks